

FCC Proceeding: 12-375

Commissioners and Staff,

I understand you are looking into the high costs of inmate phone services and the monopoly that allows them. It is outrageous that phone companies are being permitted to prey on families of inmates, and the cost goes beyond the exorbitant rates. Children of inmates, who already miss their mothers and fathers at dance recitals, concerts, graduations, and other important milestones in life, are also being denied the chance to speak to their loved ones on the phone on a regular basis. Spouses, already missing the companionship of their partner, cannot maintain as close of a relationship in this trying time because in many cases, they cannot afford to call frequently. The examples are endless, the point is the same: the victims of these usurious charges are not the inmates, whom society might be more willing to forsake. The victims are the families. We have a duty to protect both.

It is no secret that most inmates come from impoverished communities in America. An inmate's sentence is intended to deprive them of their liberty, not their entire life, and certainly not their loved ones. However, that is precisely what is accomplished by these ridiculous charges. No one is served by these rates except for the phone companies, and in the case of kickbacks, the prisons. Charging these rates does not further justice, it certainly does not further rehabilitative goals, and it is fundamentally unfair to both the inmates and their loved ones, who have done nothing wrong.

I urge you to use your authority to end these heinous practices. Truly, we should be offering at least some level of free calls for family members, but at a minimum, we must stop pricing families out of calling. Love is supposed to be able to go through the bars of the cell. The toll on families is hard enough without these unnecessary barriers to maintaining relationships with their incarcerated family members. Thank you for your consideration of this very important matter.

Respectfully,

Danielle Arbogast